THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A memorandum was received on behalf of the Minister of State (Railways). There was, however, no discussion.

(c) The delegation was led by Shri Sanwal Dass Gupta, President, Delhi Railway Licensed Porters Union. The details of the demands include treating the licensed porters as class IV employees of the Railways, revocation of licences of retrenched porters, provision of rest shelters, issue of two sets of Railway passes annually, provision of residential accommodation and certain other matters.

Bridges on Railways

2920. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of bridges in Indian Railways;

(b) what is the number of them that are identified as distressed bridges and what steps Government propose to make them safe;

(c) what is the number of them that are over hundred years old; and

(d) what is the number of them that have expired their life and what steps Government propose to make them safe?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) 1,14,260 (as on 1st April, 1987).

(b) As on 1st September, 1987, there were 1232 distressed bridges on Indian Railways.

The identification and rehabilitation of distressed bridges is a continuing process. Such bridges are kept under close watch and speed restriction imposed over them, if necessary, till the rehabilitation work is completed.

(c) Approximately 25,000.

(d) Bridges do not have a definite life span. Strengthening and rebuilding of old bridges is done on a programmed basis, depending on their condition. Besides, bridge superstructures, i.e. girders, slabs etc. are also replaced on strength consideration wherever so found necessary for introduction of heavier loads. All the Railway bridges are inspected annually and remedial action taken, wherever found necessary.

Boeing Service to Vijayawada

2921. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that at present there is no boeing service to Vijayawada;

(b) whether it is also a fact that air passengers intending to visit Vijayawada have to wait for a number of days before they can get their air reservations;

(c) whether Government would consider the desirability of introducing a boeing service to Vijayawada; and

(d) if so, by when it is likely to be introduced and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI MOTI LAL VORA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Introduction of B-737 service to Vijayawada would depend upon upgradation of the airport at Vijayawada to accept jet aircraft and subject to availability of Boeing aircraft capacity at that point.

Deterioration in Marbles of Taj Mahal

2922. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state: